

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- Sub 1  
Qp
1. An apparatus for use in a computer system comprising:
- a repository for storing a volume license agreement for a product;
  - a repository for maintaining a purchase history for the product;
  - a pricing generator to generate a purchase price for the product in accordance with the volume license agreement and the purchase history; and
  - a purchase generator to display the purchase price and transact a purchase of the product in response to a user request.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the volume licensing agreement is obtained from a clearinghouse, the clearinghouse being remotely connected to the pricing generator over a communications network.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the communications network is the Internet.
4. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the clearinghouse is further remotely connected to at least one of a plurality of publishers, the publishers periodically transmitting a new volume licensing agreement to the clearinghouse.
5. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the clearinghouse is further remotely connected to at least one of a plurality of distributors, the distributors periodically transmitting a new volume licensing agreement to the clearinghouse.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the purchase history is updated to reflect  
2 the transacted purchase.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 a rules engine containing a set of rules for determining a discount step for  
3 the product in accordance with the volume licensing agreement, and the pricing  
4 generator calculates the current price in accordance with the discount step.

Sub B2 1 8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the rules engine further contains a set of  
2 rules for determining a discount step for the product in accordance with a profile of  
3 the user that requested the purchase.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 an electronic distribution mechanism to automatically install the purchased  
3 product in response to a user request.

Sub B2 1 10. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for  
2 performing:  
3 storing a volume license agreement for a product;  
4 maintaining a purchase history for the product;  
5 generating a purchase price for the product in accordance with the volume  
6 license agreement and the purchase history; and  
7 transacting a purchase of the product in response to a user approving the  
8 purchase price.

1 11. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 having computer-executable  
2 instructions for further performing:

3 communicating the purchase price to the user in a visual display, and  
4 communicating the approval by the user to purchase in a response to the visual  
5 display.

1 12. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 having computer-executable  
2 instructions for further performing:

3 communicating the purchase price to the user in an electronic message, and  
4 communicating the approval by the user to purchase in a reply to the electronic  
5 message.

1 13. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the volume license  
2 agreement storing computer-executable instructions further include instructions to  
3 extract the volume license agreement from a remote clearinghouse.

1 14. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the volume license  
2 agreement storing instructions further include extracting updated information about  
3 the products license under the volume licensing agreement

1 15. The computer-readable medium of claim 10 wherein the purchase price  
2 generating instructions further contain instructions for determining a discount step for  
3 the product in accordance with the volume licensing agreement and the purchase  
4 history, and for generating the purchase price in accordance with the discount step.

Sub 4  
16. The computer-readable medium of claim 15 wherein the purchase price generating instructions further contain instructions for determining a discount step for the product in accordance with a user profile of the user approving the purchase price.

17. A computer implemented method comprising:  
storing a volume license agreement for a product in a repository;  
recording a history of purchases of the product pursuant to the volume license agreement;  
generating a price for a purchase of the product in accordance with the volume license agreement and the history of purchases;  
transacting the purchase of the product for the generated price in response to a purchaser request.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising:  
displaying the generated price to the purchaser for approval before transacting the purchase.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein recording a history of purchases includes recording a point value associated with the purchase in accordance with the volume license agreement.

20. The method of claim 17 wherein recording a history of purchases includes recording the date associated with the purchase.

21. The method of claim 17 wherein recording a history of purchases includes recording a profile of the purchaser that requested the purchase.

22. The method of claim 17 wherein the purchase price is generated in response to a purchaser request.

23. The method of claim 17 wherein the purchase price is generated by determining a discount step for the product in accordance with the volume licensing agreement and the recorded history of purchases.

24. The method of claim 2 wherein the clearinghouse is maintained on a web server computer accessible over the Internet